



USAID
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CROATIA

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Judicial Reform



World Learning

With USAID assistance, eight Zagreb Commercial Court judges attended an intensive exchange program on Automated Court Administration and effective bankruptcy case management in Nashville, Tennessee.

The judges were exposed to case management and useful court operations and practices related to bankruptcy matters. A formal sister court relationship was established between the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Nashville and the Zagreb Commercial Court and the Croatian judges are introducing lessons learned into the bankruptcy law.

The Zagreb commercial court is also one of the pilot courts for the national case management system developed by USAID.

Implementers: American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI); National Center for State Courts (NCSC); Booz Allen & Hamilton

Partners: Ministry of Justice, Zagreb Municipal Court, Working Group for Integrated Court Case Management System, World Bank, European Commission; Law Faculties in Osijek, Rijeka and Split; Croatian Bar Association

U.S. Agency for International Development
www.usaid.gov

Project completed April 2004

The inefficient Croatian justice system remains one of the most significant impediments to investment, fundamental protection of human rights and democratic consolidation. It is under enormous pressure for reforms and improved performance. USAID's Municipal Court Improvement Project prepared Croatia's largest court the Zagreb Municipal for the introduction of the automated case management system and assisted the Government of Croatia with the functional standards for the automated national court case management system.

USAID, through the American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI), provided court management training in support of the establishment of a permanent judicial training regime in Croatia. USAID supported law faculties with clinical law programs that provided senior students the practical skills and knowledge required of legal practitioners. The programs were strengthened and expanded at the law faculties in Split, Rijeka and Osijek.

Results USAID developed the functional standards for the automated national court case management system; installed a local area network (LAN) and Document Management software applications which serve as the IT training system for the automated case management system. The latter system will be piloted at various Croatian courts in 2005-2006 with significant World Bank and EU funding. USAID also created a law library at the Zagreb Municipal Court, providing access to key judicial rulings and legal information.

Over 700 judges were trained on the judicial ethics code and 200 younger judges on effective trial management methods and techniques to expedite case processing and improve courtroom discipline. USAID provided course materials and curriculum to the Croatian Judicial Academy for its future use in training young judges. This is a solid practice-oriented program for the young civil and criminal court judges. Additionally, this program is being used to develop a new Government of Croatia training course "Drafting the Verdict". With USAID assistance Croatia has excellent judge trainers versed in case-based training and interactive learning methods.

In addition, USAID trained over 100 Croatian Bar Association (CBA) members in alternative dispute resolution (ADR). CBA provided matching funds for the ADR training and is currently one of the Government of Croatia mediation centres which will be further strengthened using EU funding.